



miskanawah
empowerment • strength • family



Bringing Them Home

REFLECTIONS 2025
Moh'kinsstis (Calgary)

www.miskanawah.ca

OPENING MESSAGE

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On October 1 – 4, 2025, we gathered on the land to honour the children who never made it home and to support those still living with the impacts of residential schools. This four-day Sacred Fire and the accompanying ceremonies and activities created a bridge between yesterday, today and tomorrow. Survivors, families, and the spirits of the children who never came home gathered in one circle of remembrance, honouring, and healing. Through ceremony, people were invited to be seen, to be heard, and to be grounded again in identity, family, and community.

With heartfelt gratitude, Miskanawah wants to acknowledge our sponsors, community partners, staff, and most importantly, our Elders and Survivors, for helping to create a safe space for healing grounded in culture. We want to extend a special thank you to the 16 Elders who joined us on the land: Patrick and Patricia Daigneault, Reg and Rose Crowshoe, Ruth Scalplock, Francis Melting Tallow, Linda and Darryl Brass Jr., Emile Ward, Elizabeth Nadolnick, Violet March, Casey Eagle Speaker, Bryan Ernest, Bertha Twin, Vinnia Van Oerdyk, and Berna-Dean Holland. These Elders are integral to all our work at Miskanawah and we couldn't do this important work without them.



CEREMONIES & ACTIVITIES



- Opened with a **Pipe Ceremony** to set intention, honour relations, and call in the grandfathers and grandmothers to support our 4-day sacred fire.
- Hosted a **4-day Sacred Fire Ceremony** to support survivors of residential schools, their families, and the children who never returned.
- Guided **Sharing Circles** where Elders, adults, and youth spoke, listened, and learned from one another's stories.
- Presented **Ceremonial Offerings** of cloth, food and tobacco in honour of the children who never made it home, acknowledging their absence and holding their spirit in ceremony.
- Introduced a **Hoop Dancer** performance, bringing youth and culture into visible motion, reinforcing expression, identity, and intergenerational connection.
- Included **child powwow dancers**, the same age many of our residential school survivors were when culture was taken from them. Our Elders were filled with pride watching our little ones dance, practicing teachings that were almost taken from us.
- Facilitated **knowledge transfer** between Elders and youth, creating opportunities for traditional teachings and guidance to be shared and carried forward.
- Hosted a **Round Dance**, inviting song, movement, and shared ceremony as a pathway to healing and connection.
- Provided **Traditional Feasts**, where food, kinship, and ceremony combined to restore relationships and strengthen community.
- Delivered **Cultural Gifting**, providing ceremonial gifts and honouraria to Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and participants in recognition of their teachings and presence. This was a way for us to give back to our Elders and Knowledge Keepers for all they do throughout the year and for the teachings they worked hard to preserve.
- Facilitated a **traditional Sweat Lodge**, offering a culturally safe space for release, renewal, and connection.
- Provided a **massage therapist** for Elders and created space for games and prizes, recognizing that healing also comes from shared fun and laughter.

COMMUNITY & PARTNER RECOGNITION

Bringing Them Home



In the spirit of reconciliACTION, Miskanawah once again welcomed our relatives and community partners to walk alongside us in the Bringing Them Home Ceremony. Together, we created a sacred space for healing, within Moh'kinsstis (Calgary). Each partner contributed through presence, volunteerism, and acts of service that supported our Elders, families, and guests throughout the four days of ceremony.

We were honoured to receive volunteers from Aramark, Burns Memorial Fund, Calgary Homeless Foundation, Carya, Chestermere/Strathmore Family Resource Network, Closer to Home, Enviro, Families Matter, Homespace Society, Kindred, Momentum, Radiance Family Society, Trellis Society and YW Calgary. Their presence and collective efforts reflected true reciprocity and strengthened the circle of care surrounding the Sacred Fire.

Because of their volunteerism, generosity and Miskanawah's Building Relatives approach to community wellness, our Elders felt supported, our families felt held, and our community was reminded that healing is carried forward together. We extend heartfelt thanks to each organization for standing with us in ceremony and continuing the work of reconciliation here in the heart of Moh'kinsstis.



QUOTES AND PHOTOS

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“My wish for the young people is to get involved with the camp and get involved with the elders who come to camp. Because they are the library, you need to communicate with them. Don't be scared of them, but you need to sit and have a good discussion.”

Elder Reg Crowshoe



“Like a healing community where we can bring families out here that can stay out here for a week and learn not only traditional and cultural values, but try to guide them and tap into the land you know, the energy of the land, the life of the land. And because here it's a neutral space, you don't have all the city stuff.”

Elder Patrick Daigneault

“We're on the land. This is where we all connect. This is where we show love and respect. We laugh together. We talk together. That's what brings me here. That's what helps me heal. You know, a continuity always, because, you know, were the land.”

Elder Violet March



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"It's finding love and connection—relationship on the land with my relatives. Because I know that all of the things that we need, they exist within our culture, within our teachings, within our askiypimatsiwin, when out on the land where we are today."

Lead Oskapewis Kirby R.

"I know we've come a bit and we've come some ways, but there's still a lot of work to do around truth and reconciliation. And not just—I feel like—not just acknowledging what's happened, but kind of taking the next step to educate ourselves on what to do next."

Oskapewis Jen F.



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“What it means for me to be out here is I just love learning from the elders and taking in all the teachings, just watching and observing. I’m so grateful because I can actually do this. And, like many kids, can’t—don’t have the opportunity to come out here and learn.”

Oskapewis Olivia March



“I think a lot about when our elders speak about kinship and they speak about relationship. When they talk about relationship, it’s not only our relationship with each other, but it’s our relationship with the land. It’s our relationship with Mother Earth. It’s our relationship with our community.”

Oskapewis Paige C.



IMPACT SUMMARY



As we reflect on this year's Bringing Them Home Ceremony, we hold deep gratitude for the healing that took place around the Sacred Fire. Over four days, our Elders, families, and community came together to honour the children who did not make it home, and to support those still living with the impacts of residential schools. The fire carried our prayers, our stories, and our commitment to keep this work moving forward in a good way.

Bringing Them Home continues to be a place where truth is spoken, where generations stand together, and where healing begins to take deeper root. Our Elders shared teachings, our youth listened and learned, and our partners supported us in caring for our survivors and their families—each helping to build understanding and awareness that reconciliation is not a moment, but a relationship.

Miskanawah will continue to hold this space for remembrance and cultural continuity within Moh'kinsstis. Through ceremony, we honour the strength of our survivors, the resilience of our families, and the spirit of those who walk with us from the other side. Bringing Them Home reminds us that healing is ongoing, and that when we come together in this way, we all carry the fire forward.



LOOKING AHEAD

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- The Sacred Fire reminded us that healing continues beyond these four days.
- Miskanawah will keep creating land-based opportunities for Survivors, Elders, families, and youth to gather, learn, and heal together.
- We carry the fire forward in a good way.



GRATITUDE

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Kinanâskomitin to our funders, sponsors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, volunteers, and helpers. Your presence made this gathering possible. A special note of gratitude is extended to our Fire Keepers, the Miskanawah Cultural Team, and the Planning Committee for their dedication in organizing, hosting, and cooking throughout the four days. Their commitment created an atmosphere of healing, warmth, and community. As we reflect on Bringing Them Home, we recognize the strength that comes from shared healing and collective care. This gathering supported our Elders and brought our community together in a meaningful and grounded way. Looking ahead, Miskanawah remains committed to growing land-based offerings that support intergenerational healing for our community.



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MEMORIES

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for Teachings



Thank You!



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